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ABSTRACT

Changes during 1972-1984 in the status of women faculty and administrators in higher education are examined, based on a literature review. While the proportion of women faculty has increased, women still are concentrated in a small number of fields, including English, foreign languages, nursing, home economics, fine arts, and library science. The proportion of women is least at universities, greater at four-year colleges, and greatest at two-year colleges. They are paid less than are male faculty, are less likely to be tenured, advance through the academic ranks more slowly than do men, and tend to be concentrated in the lower ranks. For women who have been in academia the longest, the salary discrepancy is greatest. The greatest salary discrepancies between male and female faculty have tended to be in chemistry and the biological sciences. Similarly, women administrators are underrepresented in high-level positions, especially at public coeducational institutions, and are paid less than men. The majority of women presidents are in private four-year colleges, nearly half of which are women's colleges. For both faculty and administrators, sex differentials with regard to salary, rank, tenure, and position have remained fairly constant over the last 10 years. (Author/SW)

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Changes in the Status of Women
Faculty and Administrators in Higher
Education Since 1972

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Changes in the Status of Women
Faculty and Administrators in Higher
Education Since 1972

Abstract

This paper examines changes over the past decade in the status of women faculty and administrators in higher education. The data indicate that although the status of women faculty and administrators has improved somewhat, much remains to be accomplished. While the proportion of women faculty has increased, women still are concentrated in a small number of fields, in the lower ranks, and at less prestigious institutions. They are paid less than male faculty and are likely to be less tenured. Similarly, women administrators are underrepresented in high-level positions, especially at public co-educational institutions, and are paid less than men. For both faculty and administrators, sex differentials with regard to salary, rank, tenure, and position have remained fairly constant over the last ten years.

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Changes in the Status of Women Faculty and Administrators
in Higher Education Since 1972

As noted by Astin and Snyder (1982), several important pieces of affirmative action legislation were enacted in 1972, designed to improve the status of women in higher education. The present paper examines changes over the past decade in the status of women faculty and administrators.

Previous assessments of such changes either have focused exclusively on faculty (e.g. Astin & Snyder, 1982) or on administrators (e.g. Frances & Mensel, 1981; Van Alstyne & Withers, 1977), or have looked at both faculty and administrators but only up through the mid-1970s (e.g., Howard, 1978; Gappa & Uehling, 1979). Since, as Gappa and Uehling have pointed out, information in this area quickly becomes out of date, the purpose of the present report is to provide an updated review of the changing status of both women faculty and administrators using the most current information available as of 1984.

Women Faculty

Discipline and Type of Institution

The proportion of all full-time faculty who are women has grown over the last decade from 22.3% in 1972 to 27.1% in 1981 (Vetter, Babco, & Jensen-Fisher, 1983). Women, however, are not equally distributed throughout the various academic disciplines and types of institutions. They tend to be clustered in a small number of fields typically stereotyped as feminine: English, foreign languages, nursing, home economics, fine arts, and library science (Freeman, 1977; Gappa & Uehling, 1979). Women as a percent of science and engineering faculty increased from 14.7% to 18.9% between 1974 and 1982, with the greatest change (5.2%) occurring in psychology, and the

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smallest (1.4%) in engineering (Vetter et al., 1983).

The proportion of women is least at universities, greater at 4-year colleges, and greatest at 2-year colleges. Further, women are more likely to be found at public than at private institutions. These patterns have not changed during the last decade.

Salary

Women faculty are paid less than their male counterparts at every rank, across disciplines, and in all types of institutions. Moreover, this situation has remained virtually unchanged over the last decade: In 1972-73, men's salaries exceeded women's by 17.1% (Spencer & Bradford, 1982); in 1982-83, the comparable figure was 17.9% ("Men's and Women's Salaries", 1983).

For women who have been in academia the longest, the salary discrepancy is greatest. Thus, salary differentials are greatest for full professors. This is true regardless of discipline (Spencer & Bradford, 1982). Furthermore, the situation has changed little in the last decade. A survey by the National Research Council (1981) found that academic women who had earned Ph.D.s prior to 1960 earned 11% less than that of matching men. The discrepancy for those receiving doctorates in the 1960s was 10%, and for those earning doctorates in 1970-78, 5%.

Although sex differences in salary exist in every discipline, the greatest discrepancies over the years have been found in chemistry and the biological sciences (National Research Council, 1981; Spencer & Bradford, 1982). In recent years, however, as enough women have joined business facilities to make meaningful comparisons by sex, this field has achieved the dubious distinction of having the greatest salary differentials. Furthermore, sex differences in business salaries widened between 1980 and

1982, whereas they decreased in the humanities and social sciences ("Colleges Give Bigger Raises", 1980; "Men's and Women's Salaries", 1983).

Salary differentials also vary as a function of type of institution, being largest in universities, less in 4-year colleges, and least in 2-year colleges. The sex difference is greater in private than in public institutions. The last few years have witnessed a narrowing of the salary gap in the public sector, but an increase in the private sector ("Colleges Give Bigger Raises", 1980; "Men's and Women's Salaries", 1983). It is interesting that salary differentials are greatest in institutions where women are least represented (i.e., universities; private institutions) and are least in institutions with the greatest proportion of women (2-year colleges; public institutions) (Vetter et al., 1983).

Rank

Women advance through the academic ranks more slowly than men and tend to be concentrated in the lower ranks. This situation has changed little in the last decade. Although women have made gains at all levels, these gains are related inversely to rank, with the least change occurring at the full professor level and the greatest change at the instructor level. In 1981, women comprised 10.8% of full professors, an increase of only 1% over 1972; however, they constituted 53.3% of all instructors, up 13.4% since 1972. Gains at all ranks above the instructor level have been somewhat greater at private than at public institutions (Vetter et al., 1983).

Another way to analyze data on rank is to examine the distribution of rank within each sex. In 1969, nearly half of all male faculty but only one quarter of female faculty held the ranks of professor and associate professor. Over one-third of women were concentrated at the instructor rank as compared to one-sixth of men (Bayer, 1970). By 1981, upward movement was evident for both sexes, but men were advancing more rapidly than women. Over two-thirds

of all men but only slightly more than one-third of women held the two highest ranks. Forty percent of all women were assistant professors as compared to one-quarter of men ("9-Month Faculty Salaries", 1982). Astin and Snyder (1982), in their analysis of changes in percentages of men and women holding different academic ranks between 1972 and 1980, reported that men's status clearly improved while women's apparently declined. They hypothesized that these differences were partly a result of men's greater length of time in academe, and the disproportionate hiring of women at the assistant and associate ranks during the 1970s.

The National Research Council (1981) survey, however, found that even when male and female Ph.D. faculty members were matched in terms of years of experience, academic discipline, and educational background, the women were less likely to advance in rank than the men. Of those holding doctorates for 20 or more years, 87% of the men but 64% of the women were full professors. For faculty 10-19 years past the doctorate, men were 50% more likely than women to have reached the rank of full professor. Five to nine years past the doctorate, half the men but only one-third of the women were full or associate professors. For every discipline, women were more concentrated than men among assistant professors and nonfaculty appointees. Even among recent Ph.D.s (1975 and later), distribution by rank was less favorable for women. Regardless of time since earning the doctorate, discrepancies in rank were greatest for the biological sciences.

Tenure

In 1972, women were less likely to be tenured than men and that situation still prevails. Astin and Snyder (1982) found that 86.2% of male faculty in their sample were tenured in 1980 as compared to 68.5% in 1972, an increase of 17.7%. The proportion of female faculty with tenure, on the other hand, grew from 54.6 to 68.0%, an increase of only 13.4%. The National Research

Council (1981) data indicate that even after controlling for rank, sex differences in tenure status remain in certain fields. Among faculty who had earned doctorates in the 1940s and 1950s, women were significantly less likely to be tenured in biological sciences, psychology, and languages and literature. Of those receiving doctorates in the 1960s women were less often tenured in mathematics, biological sciences and social science departments. Further, it took women in all fields longer to achieve tenure. Among those faculty earning Ph.D.s since 1975, 25% of women but only 15% of men were in non-tenure track positions.

Recent tenure information gathered from 1592 institutions by the National Center for Education Statistics ("Faculty Salaries Up", 1982) shows that 69.7% of men and 50.0% of women at all institutions held tenure in 1981-82. Sex differences in tenure are greatest at universities, and least in two-year colleges, and are more pronounced at public than at private institutions.

Women Administrators

Employment patterns

Less information is available regarding women administrators than women faculty. In addition, comparisons over time are difficult to make since studies done at different times have not used the same data bases. Nevertheless, all studies indicate that few women occupy administrative positions, especially high level ones, although some progress has been made in the last decade. Recent data (Frances & Mensel, 1981) indicate that in 1978, women held approximately 20 percent of the top 81 administrative positions in the 1222 institutions surveyed. The top five positions (i.e., chief executive, academic, planning, business, and student life officers) were dominated by males in both the public and private sectors. This pattern had changed little since 1975. While there were slight increases in the percentages of

women holding the positions of chief academic, planning, and business officers, there was virtually no change in the percentage of women chief executives and a decrease in the percentage holding the position of chief student life officer. In 1978, women generally were more likely to hold major administrative offices in private co-educational institutions than in public ones.

Although the percentage of college presidencies held by women has not increased appreciably over the last decade, the absolute number of women presidents has increased substantially from 132 in 1972 (Astin, 1977) to 253 in 1983 (J. Touchton, personal communication, December, 1983). The majority of the women presidents are in private four-year colleges (58%), nearly half of which are women's colleges. A substantial minority of women presidents are members of religious orders (42%), although this percentage has decreased appreciably from 71% in 1975 (American Council on Education, 1982).

Changes in employment patterns of women in over 50 top-level administrative positions were minimal between 1975 and 1978 (Frances & Mensel, 1981). The greatest shift within white coeducational institutions was in external affairs positions. In private women's colleges, the largest increase occurred among chief executive officers. Overall, more changes occurred in the private than in the public sector.

Little change has occurred in the percentage of women deans throughout the last decade, or in their distribution throughout academic disciplines. In 1972, women comprised 13.7% of all deans in over 1800 institutions (Astin, 1977). Of these, 60% were in nursing and home economics. There were no women deans of dentistry, engineering, medicine, or pharmacy and only two women law deans. In 1978, women held 13.4% of the deanships in public white

coeducational institutions and 15.2% at private white coeducational institutions. The majority of these positions were in nursing and home economics. There still were no women deans of dentistry, engineering, medicine, or pharmacy, and no women law deans (Frances & Mensel, 1981). This situation remained virtually unchanged as of 1981 when 12.8% of deanships were held by women, and over half of all women deans were in nursing, home economics, arts and sciences, and continuing education (Moore, 1983). A 1976 survey of 588 colleges and universities (Howard, 1978) found that more than one-third of these institutions had no women deans. Coeducational schools, large institutions (enrollment above 5000), and public institutions had fewer women deans. By contrast, at least half of all deans were women in two-thirds of the women's colleges.

In 1978, the only administrative positions with more than 50% women in white co-educational institutions were those of dean of nursing, dean of home economics, director of affirmative action, and (in private institutions only) director of student health services (Frances & Mensel, 1981). Furthermore, half of all ~~white~~ ^{women} administrators in white co-educational institutions were concentrated in ten positions: nursing dean, library director, bookstore manager, registrar, health service director, financial aid director, affirmative action director, student counseling director, information office director, and chief public relations officer. As Gappa and Uehling (1979) have noted, these positions are primarily in the area of student services rather than academic administration, in line with stereotypes of feminine interest in the helping role.

Salary

Sex differences in administrators' salaries parallel the pattern found for faculty salaries. In 1978, women typically earned less than white men

in practically all administrative positions and at all types of institutions (Frances & Mensel, 1981). In white co-educational institutions, women were paid between 68% and 80% of the salary earned by white men holding the same job. Women were paid somewhat more at private women's colleges, but still earned only 78 to 83% of what white men were paid. This picture essentially had not changed since 1975 (Van Alstyne & Withers, 1977). In 1978, approximately 11% of white women were in the top salary quartile as compared to 19% of white men, whereas 40% of white women but only 31% of white men were in the lowest salary quartile (Frances & Mensel, 1981). These figures were a slight improvement over 1975 (Van Alstyne & Withers, 1977). Salary differentials between women and men were not related to number of years on the job.

Summary and Conclusion

The status of women faculty and administrators in higher education has improved somewhat during the last decade, but much remains to be accomplished.

While the proportion of women faculty has increased, women still are concentrated in a small number of fields, in the lower ranks, and at less prestigious institutions. They are paid less than male faculty and are less likely to be tenured. Moreover, sex differentials with regard to salary, rank, and tenure have changed little over the last decade.

A similar situation prevails with respect to women administrators. Women are underrepresented in high-level administrative positions, especially at public co-educational institutions. Furthermore, women administrators earn less than men in virtually all positions. Again, these sex differences both in distribution throughout the administrative hierarchy and salary have remained fairly constant over the last ten years.

Recommendations for further improving the status of women in higher education abound (e.g., Gappa & Uehling, 1979; Howard, 1978; Moore, 1983;

Spencer & Bradford, 1982). While discussion of these recommendations is beyond the scope of the present paper, it can only be hoped that the various strategies recommended for achieving sex equity in higher education will be instrumental in bringing about changes in the decade ahead which are more substantial than those which have occurred in the past ten years.

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